

PROGRAM ACTIVITY REPORT (PAR)



MRSA and Feral Swine

Methicillin-resistant *Staphylococcus aureus* (MRSA) infection (as defined by the Mayo Clinic) is difficult to treat, and can spread and sometimes become life-threatening. There are a number of different strains of MRSA that can be grouped into three categories: health care-associated MRSA (HA-MRSA), community-associated MRSA (CA-MRSA), and livestock-associated MRSA (LA-MRSA). MRSA can be contracted from contaminated surfaces, open wounds or abscesses, secretions and other fomites.

Since 2004, there have been multiple reports of MRSA in farm animals, and some form of animal to human transmission has raised concerns of animals being reservoirs for MRSA infections. Certain strains of MRSA have been cultured from nasal swabs taken from livestock (mostly pigs and cattle) and the same strains were cultured from nasal swabs of the farm work-

ers that were tending these livestock.

There have been a few research studies reporting the presence of



MRSA in wildlife, but currently no surveys in feral swine within the United States have been conducted. As populations of feral swine continue to increase in size and distribution, improved understanding of the potential risk of

MRSA transmission from this invasive species to people is becoming increasingly important.

The NWDP and Colorado State University Diagnostic Laboratory have been collaborating to determine the role feral swine could play in the transmission of MRSA to people. Utilizing the NWDP-Wildlife Tissue Archive, feral swine nasal swabs are currently being analyzed from five states over a three-year sampling period to determine the presence of MRSA. Results will be used to determine if additional surveys should be conducted.

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The original artwork on this page was created by the National Wildlife Disease Program's Erika Kampe and Sarah Goff



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